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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. In an electronic document handling system, a method of associating documents comprising the steps of:

generating a staple data object, for representing an association of selected pages and selected documents;

generating an electronic cover sheet for the stack object;

accepting from a user a list of at least one page of at least one electronic document;

referencing each page or each electronic document in the list as an item of the stack object;

accepting a staple instruction from a user; and

cryptographically securing the staple data object in response to receipt of the staple instruction.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of accepting a list is a step of accepting a manually input list.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of accepting a list is a step of accepting a computer-generated list.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of presenting a user with an online form as an aid to selecting pages or documents for association as a stack.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of prompting for the staple instruction by presenting the user with a stapler icon which, when selected, represents the staple instruction.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of copying the selected pages and selected documents in a stack to static storage.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising a step of copying the selected pages and selected documents in a stack to a local storage device local to the electronic document handling system.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

displaying a first list of documents, wherein the first list of documents lists the documents that are selected for inclusion in an open stack;

4   displaying a second list of document, wherein the second list of documents list

5   documents that have not been selected for inclusion in an open stack; and

6   ·   displaying a user interface control operative to obtain selections from a user of

7   documents from the second list for inclusion in an open stack.

1   9. In an electronic document handling system, a method of manipulating documents

2   comprising the steps of:

3   generating a staple data object, for representing an association of selected pages and

4   selected documents;

5   generating an electronic cover sheet for the stack object;

6   accepting from a user a list of at least one page of at least one electronic document;

7   referencing each page or each electronic document in the list as an item of the stack

8   object;

9   accepting a staple instruction from a user;

10   cryptographically securing the staple data object in response to receipt of the staple

11   instruction;

12   opening a secured stack upon receipt of a stack open instruction;

13   presenting the contents of the secured stack for perusal by the user;

14   accepting additions and deletions of items on the secured stack; and

15   resecuring the secure stack upon receipt of a stack restaple operation.